

65-659/a

23 APR 1965

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cc
Honorable J. W. Fulbright
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing you in response to your recent request for the Agency's views on S. Con. Res. 17, expressing the sense of the Congress that Soviet persecution of Jews and other persons because of their religion be condemned.

While it would not be appropriate for this Agency to comment on the propriety of Congressional enactment of this resolution, we are pleased to provide the Committee with some factual information which the Committee might find useful.

In the past year, there have been signs that the Soviet regime is concerned to improve its public image by gestures calculated to "disprove" charges of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. This trend was apparent well before Khrushchev's ouster in October 1964 and had continued under the new leadership. The Jewish community in Minsk, a city visited frequently by western tourists, was granted unusual permission last fall to purchase alternate quarters when their old synagogue was torn down to make way for a housing development.

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The press campaign concerning economic crimes, in which Jews were often the accused, has been significantly reduced. Two Jews convicted of economic crimes last year have been officially exonerated, with due publicity accorded their cases in the central press. There have also been announcements of plans to increase publication of Soviet authors who write in the Yiddish language, and a Russian-Yiddish dictionary has been promised for later this year.

The superficiality of these gestures is suggested, however, by the fact that a western correspondent was able to find only one bookstore in the city of Moscow which had received any copies of a recently announced collection of Yiddish prose, and it had received only 80 copies. There are an estimated 500,000 Jews in Moscow.

Along with all other religions, Judaism continues to be a target in the anti-religious campaign, and anti-Semitic articles sporadically appear in the provincial press under the guise of atheist propaganda. Jews are still the only officially recognized national minority in the Soviet Union lacking their own schools, newspapers, publishing houses, and permanent theaters.

I hope that this information will be of help to the Committee in its consideration of S. Con. Res. 17.

The Bureau of the Budget has advised it has no objection to the submission of this report from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Faithfully yours,

CENSIS

Marshall S. Carter
Lieutenant General, USA
Acting Director

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